

# Maturango News

Preserve, interpret and develop an appreciation for  
the natural and cultural history of the Northern Mojave Desert.

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Open Monday – Saturday 10 am – 5 pm, Sunday Noon – 4pm 760.375.6900 [www.maturango.org](http://www.maturango.org)

Death Valley Tourist Center Northern Mojave Visitor Center

## Museum Director's Notes

*Debbie Benson, Museum Director*

Spring is the source of much activity due to warming and longer days. This is true in and around the Museum as well as the truly great outdoors. It's been a fun year to take a wildflower book out and allow some book-learning out in the hills.

Here at the Museum we are working on many projects. Some are quick fixes and others are of a more long term nature. So much depends on the abilities of our members and volunteers who are most gracious with their time and energies as we work to keep up the stewardship of our Museum. As most non-profits know, it is the volunteers that make the difference. What I hear most often, is that these marvelous people don't always know they are just what we are looking for! Maybe you like to talk to people about local travel, or you are interested in IT and computers, or perhaps you like to help with construction or art projects. Maybe you just like to help when needed. That is good too. You are appreciated and we welcome your enthusiasm. Come see us sometime!

Be well!!

## Searles Valley Historical Society Museums Field Trip Saturday, May 13

Have you ever driven through Trona on your way to someplace else, passing all the wonderful museums and wished you could stop and take a look? I know I have thought about it, but it can sometimes be hard to do spur of the moment since several of the museum buildings are open by appointment only. Guess what? We've made those appointments for this trip.

Come with us to the Searles Valley Historical Society Museums. We'll be visiting the Fire Museum, History House, Trona Railway Museum and Caboose, and the Old Guest House Museum. Docents will be on-hand at each location to guide us through their rich history and their exhibits. Want to peruse at your own pace? You can do that as well during the time we are at each area.

Our journey will start at the Maturango Museum and we'll drive over to Trona through Poison Canyon. Oh by the way, did you know that the "real name" of Poison Canyon is Salt Wells Canyon? I didn't. I've already learned something.

We'll make a brief stop at the Trona Pinnacles turn off to view two monuments; John Searles' Freight Wagon Route Monument and the Epsom Salts Monorail Monument. If you want to learn more about the Epsom Salts Monorail, Maturango Museum has a great book on this subject.

From there we'll continue to the Fire Museum. Inside this museum are two antique fire engines, a 1924 Stutz and a 1938 Ahren-Fox. Displays in the Fire Museum include 20 photographs of major fires in Argus, Borosolvay, and Trona and other fire memorabilia.



We'll then make a quick stop at the Trona Rest Stop to take care of business and proceed to the History House, Caboose, and Railway Museum.

The History House is one of the oldest residential houses in Trona (built around 1920) and is a treasure trove of items from yesteryear. The Trona Railway Museum displays artifacts from the Trona Railway and the Caboose will be open to those able to navigate the steep stairs to get in and out.

We will then return to the Trona Rest Stop for lunch. The kiosk at the Rest Stop was a joint project of the BLM Ridgecrest Office and the Searles Valley Historical Society. There are 16 panels that have information about the local area, local mining, local history, sightseeing and recreational opportunities, and desert safety.



After lunch we'll head to our final stop, the Old Guest House Museum. This building was built around 1917 and is one of the oldest buildings in Searles Valley. Originally it was built as four apartments and was remodeled as a guest house with twelve rooms for visitors to Trona. The twelve rooms show events in Searles Valley from the early mining days to present plant ownership. Since this is our final stop, once you have finished viewing all the cool "stuff", you can head home, we just ask that you let the of the Field Trip leader know you are leaving.

9am: meet at the Maturango Museum for check in. Participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. Car caravan will be organized and for those that want to carpool, we'll figure it out there.

The cost is \$25 for museum members (\$40 for 2 adult members), \$30 nonmembers (\$50 for 2 adults). Pets are not allowed. Buy tickets at <https://shop.maturango.org/field-trip-searles-valley-historical-society-museums-may-13-2023/> or come to the Maturango Museum Store.

Be sure you have enough gas (less than 100 miles round trip), car and tires in good running order.

Usual dress code for field trips applies: hat, sunscreen, comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water, and camera (although some of the buildings ask no photographs). It is better to have these items and not need them, than need them and not have them.

Bring a picnic lunch to eat while we are at the Trona Rest Stop.

## **Docent Doings**

*By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator*

Did you know that gray foxes can climb trees or that they have retractable claws just like cats do? We learned all this and saw an adorable photo of a baby badger in Zoe Stephens' wonderful presentation on Mammalian Predators of the Mojave Desert. The docents were very pleased to visit classrooms last month; Glenn Harris, Debbie Pio, and Bob Parker presented a program on earthquakes. Terry McGuire and I presented a program on desert animals. I was amazed at the stamina of Dan Burnett, Bob Parker, Dave Kurdeka, and Susan Moore when they presented reptiles to three groups of 30 students all in one morning. Since each group was divided into sub-groups to see lizards, snakes, and tortoises it amounted to each docent giving 9 presentations. Carol Dezelle and Bob Parker presented an art lesson to Mrs. Vaughn's class. Terry McGuire, Sue Parker, Ingrid Carroll, and I brought animals, pelts, stamps to the Walk for Autism Awareness on a Saturday. Charlotte Goodson and the Children's Hour team gave a wonderful Children's Hour.

Our next Free Saturday, May 13, will feature Reptiles and a craft activity.

May is the month for school classes to tour the Museum.. The children always love the sabre-tooth cat display even if the skull morphing to a fur-covered skull frightens them; they usually want to figure out how it works! Another popular spot is the labyrinth. We always have to remind the children not to run in the labyrinth because the tufa rocks that form it are so sharp.

Bev Hill and Sharon Oldfield are retiring from their positions of president and secretary. Shirley Crouse will take over as president and Ingrid Carroll as secretary. We thank Bev and Sharon for their many years as officers! The Docent League is planning a potluck luncheon for the June 5 meeting.

Please call Nora Nuckles at the Museum if you would like to investigate becoming a docent!

## **“Artistic Water-Wise Landscape” Exhibit** **May 15 – October in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery**

Many Ridgecrest residents landscape their yards to minimize outdoor water use and increase the curb appeal of their home. Residents accomplish this by avoiding the use of grass and creatively increasing the amount of “dryscape” (dryscape being yard surface area requiring no water). This exhibit provides examples of landscapes in Ridgecrest that are both attractive and that significantly reduce water usage. Many different dryscape techniques can be incorporated to make an attractive landscaped yard. These techniques include the use of walkways, patios, driveways, raised planters, retaining walls, borders, yard art, rock, gravel, hardpack and accents. This exhibit is partially supported by the Arts Council of Kern.

### **Natural History News**

*By Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator*

Spring is here and the wildlife is out doing its thing, mainly making offspring. Hummingbirds, the smallest of our avian species build their nests about 3 to 10 feet off the ground using plant down, lichen and spider webs. The nest itself is about the size of half a ping pong ball and secured to a branch with spider web silk. Unfortunately, due to size and type of materials, strong winds can knock the fragile nest down. Incubation is 14 to 18 days during this time the female leaves the nest only to feed. The chicks stay in the nest until they are about 3 weeks old. Then they spend about a week learning to fly off the ground.



Cooper’s Hawks (a bird of prey) build their own nests or use abandoned owl or raven nests. The hawk chicks leave the nest before they are ready to fly, the parents tend the chicks even when they are on the ground, and will defend, aggressively, as much as possible. Observe the chicks and other babies from a distance. Keep dogs and cats away. Chances are the offspring is not really abandoned. They probably are just fine. This time of year, veterinarians and animal control get calls regarding what the public might think are abandoned wildlife babies. This usually not true. If after 24 hours the baby has not been attended by a parent then call animal control.

So, go out and enjoy spring and wildlife, but from a distance.

## **Audubon Society Traveling Photographic Exhibit** **Sylvia Winslow Gallery: April 19 – May 10**

This photo exhibit, sponsored by Kerncrest Audubon Society, allows the viewer to appreciate the wonder of birds and the places they inhabit. This is the 13<sup>th</sup> annual competition for the Audubon Society. Photographs are selected by a group of 8 professional photographers and videographers. This year the categories for monetary prizes are: Grand Prize, Professional, Amateur, Youth, Plants for Birds, Fisher Prize, Female Bird, plus four honorable mentions. The winning photos, videos and honorable mentions were selected from 2,416 entrants from all 50 states, Washington D.C. and 7 Canadian provinces and territories.



AUDUBON  
PHOTOGRAPHY  
AWARDS

*The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Audubon works throughout the Americas using, science, advocacy, education and on-the-ground conservation. State programs, nature centers, chapters, and partners give Audubon an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire, and unite diverse communities in conservation action. A nonprofit conservation organization since 1905, Audubon believes in a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Learn more about how to help at [www.audubon.org](http://www.audubon.org) and follow us on Twitter and Instagram at @audubonsociety.*

## Children's Hour at the Maturango Museum

Friday, May 12, 10:30 - 11:30

We will celebrate the last of the spring season with special activities in the Gladys Merrick Garden. The children will be invited to explore the garden's trails making fascinating discoveries along the way! They will have "I Spy" booklets to aid in spotting the wildlife commonly seen in the garden. It may be surprising to find how much life there is among the desert plants - butterflies and bees pollinating the flowers - hummingbirds, too, while also sipping the sweet nectar - cottontails nibbling growing leaves and stems - lizards, ground squirrels, and even ravens or roadrunners hunting the food they need. In the habitat enclosure for protected desert tortoises, the children may observe them out of their burrow shelters and feeding on flowers.

The traditional end of the year treats, both sweets and fruits, are the Children's Hour Story Docents way of thanking all the children and their families for their wonderful participation. We will look forward to their return when these events resume in September. The fall schedule will be posted on the Museum's website, [www.maturango.org](http://www.maturango.org). We hope you'll remember that there are always interesting things to learn on visits during the summer with the added pleasure of a cool environment!

## East Side Museums Field Trip

June 9, 2023

Join us for a day long field trip to Eastern Sierra museums. Our trip will include a morning visit to the Eastern California Museum in Independence, bring-your-own-picnic lunch by the creek on their shady grounds, and an afternoon tour of the Museum of Western Film History in Lone Pine, the go-to place for the many movies filmed in the dramatic Alabama Hills and Eastern Sierra.

Meet at Eastern California Museum, limit 20 participants, all mobility accessible. Tickets must be purchased in advance; \$35 Maturango members, \$45 nonmembers; includes admission to Western Film Museum. Purchase tickets: Maturango Gift Shop 760-375-6900 or online at the Maturango website [shop.maturango.org](http://shop.maturango.org)



### Foliass Duo Heartdance Tour

Thursday, May 25, 2023, 7 - 8 pm

Tickets \$20 adult, \$12 Youth

Purchase tickets: Maturango Gift Shop 760-375-6900 or online at the Maturango website <https://shop.maturango.org/trips-tours/>

Experience Foliass Duo, a world-class flute and guitar ensemble hailing from Michigan's freshwater coast as they return to the western United States. With music from their most recent album release "Heartdance," they'll perform original instrumental compositions inspired by life on the road and impressions left by the natural world.

Over the past twenty years, guitarist Andrew Bergeron and flutist Carmen Maret of the Foliass Duo have performed across North America, South America, and Europe, with each location's beauty forging the rhythms, contours, and textures of their meticulously crafted and breathtaking music.

[www.foliassduo.com](http://www.foliassduo.com)

**Yard Sale** coming up on Friday June 23 and Saturday June 24, 7am – noon.

Do your Springtime house and garden freshening by donating your unneeded treasures to us.

Please bring items to the Museum after June 1.

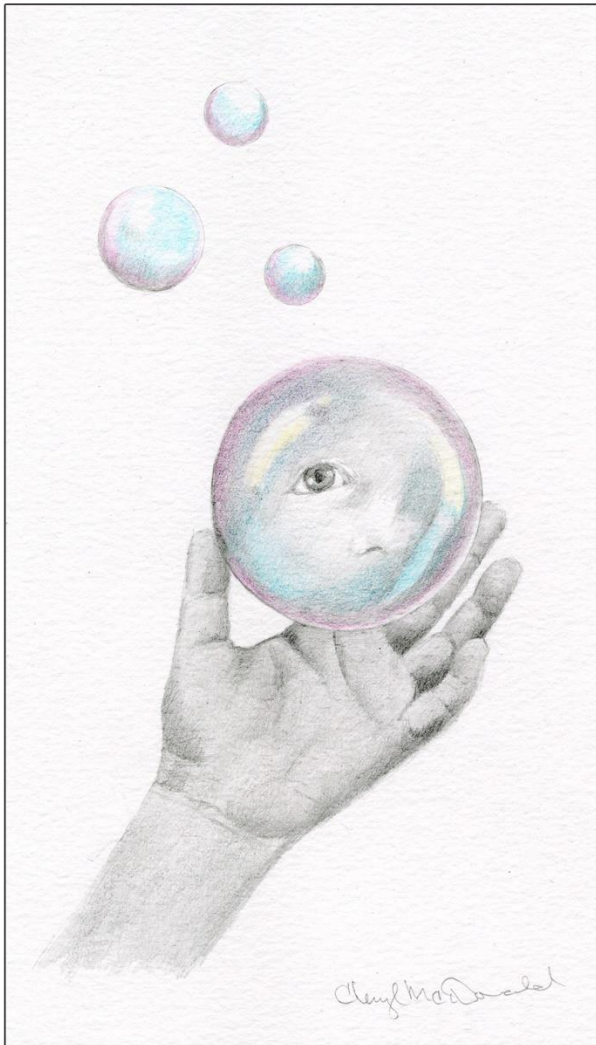
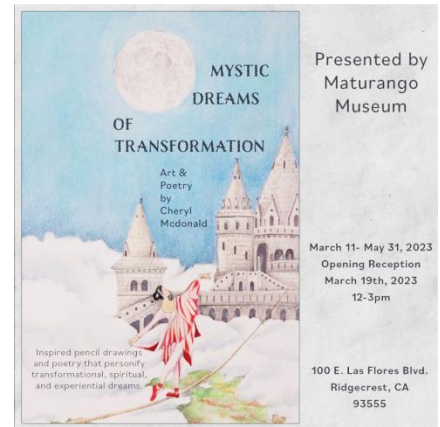
## Cheryl McDonald's Art Exhibit

### "Mystic Dreams of Transformation"

In the Coso Room through May 31.

This exhibit is a collection of surrealistic scenes created in graphite and colored pencil with accompanying poetry.

There is also a book and prints that can be purchased.



Cheryl McDonald is a local award winning artist who has been teaching for over 15 years. She is a multimedia artist and writer.

[www.cherylmcdonaldcreative.com](http://www.cherylmcdonaldcreative.com)

## *Drawing from Your Dreams with Cheryl McDonald*

Learn how to draw using visualization techniques to create images from your imagination and your dreams. You will learn basic drawing skills that will allow you to get comfortable with the process of drawing and visualization techniques that relieve stress and promote creativity in a relaxed and fun environment.

**Maturango Museum  
100 E. Las Flores Ave.  
Ridgecrest, CA**

**May 24th, 2023 4-6pm**

**\$50 per person**

**Includes all materials including a sample dream journal, beverages and light appetizers.**

**Reservations Required by May 21st**

**Maximum 20 people per class**

**760-375-6900**

## Maturango Museum of the IWW

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Open every day (except major holidays)  
10 am – 5 pm

### Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director  
Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer  
Barbara Bane, M.A., RPA, Archaeology Curator  
Elaine Wiley, History Curator  
Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator  
Julie Stephens, Finance Manager  
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator, Newsletter Editor  
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator  
Linda Saholt, Petroglyph Tour Coord., Membership, Donations  
Leslie Layfield, Accounting Bookkeeper  
Kelly Goff, Museum Assistant  
Deanna Stewart, Museum Assistant  
Nora Nuckles, Museum Assistant  
Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant  
Jacque Ahlin, Curation Tech

### Committee Chairpersons

Elaine Wiley, Publications  
Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning

### Board of Trustees

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### Donations in March 2023

#### Donations

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Elaine and Peter Wiley

#### Art Gallery, in Memory of Pat Kleinschmidt

Helen Baker

#### Building Fund

Robert Westbrook

#### In Honor of Dr. Naomi Fraga, Botanist

Kathryn LaShure

#### Sierra STEM

Neal and Emily Fox

#### Wildflower Exhibit

Elaine and Peter Wiley

#### New Members

Thea Cornell  
Jean Lagarde  
Barry and Gina Niesen  
Josh and Abby Nazeck  
Lindsey Stephens family  
Caroline and Steve Walker



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## Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso Fundraiser

All day, Wednesday May 10.

20% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango Museum

You must mention this fundraiser when ordering.

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**BEANSTER'S**  
**ESPRESSO**

### Upcoming Events

- Children's Hour: May 12, 10:30am, will feature "Garden Adventures".
- Free Saturday, May 13: Reptiles, 11am – 2pm with craft activities.
- Searles Valley Historical Society Museums Field Trip Saturday, May 13
- "Artistic Water-Wise Landscape" Exhibit May 15 – October in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery
- Drawing Class with Cheryl McDonald: Wednesday May 24, 4 – 6pm
- The Audubon Traveling Exhibit featuring the 2022 Photography Award Winners will be on display in the Sylvia Winslow gallery until May 10.
- The Hot Rod Years Video: Saturday May 20, 6:30pm
- Thursday, May 25: Folias Duo – Guitar and flute duet, 7 - 8 pm
- East Side Museums Field Trip: June 9

### **The Hot Rod Years – Ridgecrest, California**

Video by Mark Pahuta and John Daly

Saturday May 20<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm

In the 1940s and 1950s there appeared to be a significant car culture here in Ridgecrest and China Lake, more so than most small towns in America. Most local teenage kids back then would work at odd jobs, buy their cars, modify them and race them.

This new, historical video, "The Hot Rod Years – Ridgecrest, California" documents that car culture and the early days of the area. The video interviews 20 early hot rodders; their stories tell of the Inyokern Drag Strip, racing in the streets of Ridgecrest, cruising the boulevard, the hangouts at the Yucca Inn, Foster's Freeze, A&W, and the Susie Q, the Dust Devils, the Dead Owls, going off to Vietnam, and the locals' often acrimonious relationship with the Navy guys on the base.

This 2-hour video will have its premiere screening at the Maturango Museum. Admission is free. Doors will open at 6:15. All are welcome though seating is limited!

### **How do you like our new electronic sign?**

Want to post a brief appropriate message for an event or personal endearment?

Come in to the museum store for details. We suggest a donation to support our programs.

Please contact Debbie ([debbie@maturango.org](mailto:debbie@maturango.org)) or Julie ([julie@maturango.org](mailto:julie@maturango.org))

The Kern Valley Museum's Annual History Day: May 20, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is the Kern River Valley Historical Society's way of thanking the community for supporting us. We will have Dutch oven cooking again this year, and a Dutch oven cooking class.

<https://kernvalleysun.com/stories/641935867-spotlight-on-the-kern-valley-museum-history-day-dutch-oven-cooking>